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August 11, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Berlin Negotiating Papers for Hyannisport

Here are two documents that may be helpful on negotiations:

1. The Acheson Report. (Stevenson has not yet returned your original copy.)
2. A memorandum Henry Owen prepared summarizing an extremely interesting meeting which a group of your staff had yesterday.

There is increasing evidence on all sides that we now need to get down to the bedrock of deciding on a negotiating position. The staff work in Paris did not get out of the rut of our 1959 position and I think it plain that new ideas will not come out of 4-Power discussions; they will only come out of your own Government and your own insistence. (This is the one aspect of Foy Kohler on which I agree with Chester Bowles.) The Acheson negotiating proposals move a significant distance, and the additional ideas sketched in Tab 2 go quite a lot further. I must say I am greatly attracted by the notion of shifting our basic stand in West Berlin from occupation rights to self-determination and a free choice of protectors by the West Berliners themselves.

Since any new negotiating posture will require U. S. leadership, and since time may be short, I think this is the most important problem in foreign policy now before us, and my suggestion is that after you have read these papers we should arrange conversations next week with a special group -- not the steering group and not the coordinating group -- which might include, in addition to the Secretary of State and Foy Kohler, such men as Kissinger, Bohlen, Taylor, Sorenson, Owen.

McG. B.

Berlin